

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) An isolated alkaline protease consisting of an amino acid sequence wherein one or more amino acid residues selected from those located at (a) position 63, (b) position 89, (c) position 120, (d) positions 63 and 187, (e) position 226, (f) position 296, (g) position 304 of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 are the following amino acid residues, respectively: (a) serine, (b) histidine, (c) arginine, (d) serine, (e) tyrosine, (f) valine, and (g) serine, and wherein said isolated alkaline protease has alkaline protease activity.

2. (Previously Presented) An isolated alkaline protease having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or an amino acid sequence having at least 98.1% homology with the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, wherein one or more amino acid residues selected from those located at (a) position 63, (b) position 89, (c) position 120, (d) positions 63 and 187, (e) position 226, (f) position 296, (g) position 304 of the amino acid sequence of SEQ No: 1, or at positions corresponding to these positions, are the following amino acid residues, respectively: (a) serine, (b) histidine, (c) arginine, (d) serine, (e) tyrosine, (f) valine, and (g) serine, and wherein said isolated alkaline protease has alkaline protease activity.

3. – 7. (Canceled)